

Belgian performance to open in Green Bay

Three Old World Belgian folk performing groups will make their first United States appearance at the WBAY auditorium in Green Bay on Wednesday, July 2nd. An afternoon performance will begin at 2 p.m. and the evening curtain will rise at 8.

The groups are "Compagnie Theatrale Aime Courtois", "Frarie de Masuis et Cotelis de James" and "La Psalette de Bruxelles." Bob DeChamp, a leading Belgian folk singer, will also be featured.

The entertainers are part of a total group of approximately 300 Belgians who will arrive at Austin Straubel Airport at 6 p.m., Friday, June 27. For most, this will be their first United States visit.

While in America the Belgians will visit Door county where they will be guests of the Peninsula Belgian American Club of Namur. Many of these visitors served as hosts to a contingent of local club members who toured Belgium last year.

The July 2nd program, described as being a "once in a lifetime event", will last about an hour and a half. Dance and choral performers will wear the period dress of the 16th and 18th centuries; both eras to which their singing and dancing relates.

Ralph Bader of Dyckesville has been named honorary chairman of this event and his committee consists of Ray Vandenhouten and Wendell DeBaker, also of Dyckesville.

The "Fratie" (brotherhood) group is composed of 30 young people who banded together with one purpose in mind; to keep alive the musical folklore

and customs of the area. Their costumes have been carefully reconstructed according to the original festival dress of 18th century entertainers and their musicians are skilled on the accordian, violin, clarinet and tambourin.

The Psalette of Brussels is a mixed choral ensemble consisting of 50 voices and musicians from the Brussels area. Twenty-four of their top performers are making the trip to Wisconsin.

Founded in 1961, the Psalette specializes in authentic old French and Walloon music of the 16th century including the "Songs of the Birds" of Claude Janequin and contemporary music from the works of Stavinsky, Debussy, Ravel, etc.

The group's theatrical company is recognized as Namur's official Walloon theater group and specializes in authentic Walloon comedies and plays. The cast numbers 11 persons.

Bob DeChamp is one of Belgian's leading singers whose folk recordings are well known in Wisconsin's Belgian communities. He will be accompanied by his personal accordianist.

The performing groups will be escorted by Col. Lucien Leonard (retired, Belgian Army) and Charles Henriette, who serve respectively as president and secretary of the Wallonie - Wisconsin organization. The purpose of Wallonie-Wisconsin, based in Namur, is to maintain cultural and friendship ties between those of Belgian ancestry and the "homeland."